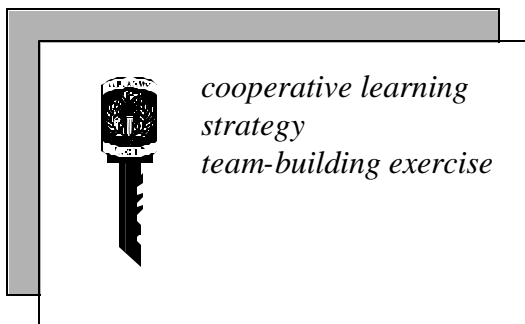


LESSON 4: USE VARIETY IN YOUR LESSON PLAN



INTRODUCTION

In the *Delivering Instruction* lesson, you learned a variety of teaching methods, some involving individual effort, and others encompassing group work.

In this lesson you will learn how to structure group exercises into a cooperative learning experience for the class.

COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY

A **cooperative learning strategy** is one in which a team of students work with and depend upon each other to accomplish a common goal. Each team member is responsible for:

- A portion of the work, achieving an individual goal
- Instructing the other team members
- Receiving information from the other members
- Helping their teammates achieve their individual goals
- Reaching the group goal

The team members work both independently and as a group to gather,

disseminate, discuss, and incorporate information into a single cohesive element.

A cooperative learning strategy is best used when the learning goals are important, both mastery and retention is important, and the task is complex or conceptual.

As you progress through this lesson, you will learn some strategies that can help build good teamwork, strategies that can help students respond to and discuss questions raised in the lesson, strategies that can help students learn the material quickly, and some benefits of cooperative learning.

TEAM BUILDING STRATEGIES

Teams are comprised of a group of individuals associated together in work or activity. Since you are going to form teams when using a cooperative learning strategy, it only makes sense to try and have the best teams possible. Following is a list of **team-building exercises** that you may employ to help you foster good team spirit.

TEAM CHEER

The team creates a cheer to be used when the group has accomplished a task and is celebrating.

TEAM COLOR

The team chooses a color that represents the personality of the group members.

TEAM EXCELLENCE SYMBOL

The team decides on a physical symbol formed by the group that indicates they have finished an assigned task and that they fulfilled the requirements of the task.

TEAM FOOD

The team selects a food (candy, fruit, gum, etc.) that the whole group enjoys and can be used as part of their celebrations.

TEAM LOGO

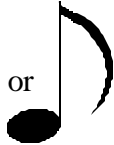
The team designs a logo that visually represents the team.

TEAM NAME

The group decides on an appropriate name for the team.

TEAM SONG

The team creates a song or selects a song that reflects the team's personality.

**QUESTION STRATEGIES**

In a standard classroom, the teacher asks questions from time-to-time and calls on one or more students to answer the question. When a student wants to ask a question, he or she will raise a hand and wait for teacher recognition before speaking.

Group dynamics make the standard question and answer format difficult to use. Following, are a series of strategies that you may employ in a cooperative learning situation to facilitate question response and discussion in a group setting.

HEADS TOGETHER

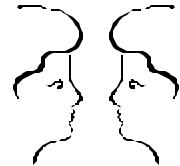
Pairs of students get together to answer a question, solve a problem, review an assignment, react to a video, generate a discussion, etc.

NUMBERED HEADS TOGETHER

The team members count off (e.g. one, two, three, four), discuss a problem together, reach some conclusion, then randomly team members answer a question when the teacher calls their number.

PARTNER INTERVIEWS (PI)

Partners take turns interviewing each other to determine their level of understanding of a concept.

**ROUND-ROBIN**

Each team member takes a turn adding information or sharing an idea; each class member shares an insight or new learning; each team member contributes to the creation of a writing project; etc.

ROUND-ROBIN BRAINSTORM

Team members take turns adding to a group brainstorm.

SQUARED-SHARED-PARTNER-INTERVIEWS

Pairs join with another pair to form a square and share what they gathered from their previous interviews.

THINK-PAIR-SHARE (TPS)

Individually, students think about a question, pair with another student to discuss their thoughts, then share their thoughts with a larger group or with the class.

TEAM BRAINSTORM

Team members randomly and rapidly contribute many ideas.

GATHER, SHARE, & LEARN STRATEGIES

Despite the good intention of teachers, events can occur that prohibit them from adhering to their lesson plan (special school assemblies, sickness, inclement weather, etc.). Following are several strategies that you may make use of when you are called upon to teach that will enable the groups to gather, share, and learn their lesson material in a relatively short period of time.



CAROUSEL

Teams work together to respond to different problems by moving from station to station or send their problem around the groups so other groups can contribute to the solution by responding on the chart or paper they receive.

CONVERSATION CIRCLES

Two circles are formed with one circle inside the other. One student from each circle faces another student. In these pairs, students discuss questions posed by the teacher. Circles rotate two to four times in opposite directions so students discuss questions with new partners.

JIGSAW

Material, like a chapter in a book, different web sites, several articles, etc., is

segmented and each team member is assigned a segment to study and/or review. Team members return to share their segment with the rest of the group.

JIGSAW AND EXPERT GROUPS

Each team member is assigned a segment of information. Each member studies the assigned section independently. Members then find others from different groups who studied the same material. Together they review what they learned and reinforce the learning, clarify any misunderstandings, and fill in gaps. They become experts. They return to their original group and share their expertise.

JIGSAW WITH EXPERT GROUPS

Each team member is assigned a segment of information. Each member finds all the others from other groups that share the same assignment. Together, they study the same segment of information and become experts on that information. They return to their original group and share their expertise.

TEAM GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

Together, a team prepares a single graphic organizer of information.

TEAM PRODUCT OR PROJECT

Teams produce a product or engage in a project as a culminating activity.

TEAM PERFORMANCE

Teams prepare a performance or presentation based on a synthesis of what they learned.

BENEFITS OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

There are real benefits for using a cooperative learning strategy in the classroom. One of the most important goals in education is to promote constructive relationships and positive attitudes among the student body.

The group dynamics of cooperative learning requires a large amount of social interaction. Students share ideas and feelings. Team members get to know one another and develop a better understanding of other individuals. The students learn to trust, depend upon, and respect one another as they strive to achieve a common goal. Teammates are appreciated for what they can do and are not simply rejected for what they cannot do.

Cooperative learning groups tend to be more creative than individual students or non-cooperative learning groups because the group dynamics encourage and require all team members to actively participate. Therefore, more ideas are generated, the quality of ideas is increased, and there is more originality in creative problem solving activities.

CONCLUSION

Cooperative learning is based on the belief that all people are good at something, have the ability to help others, and can benefit from help from others. This cooperation among all students promotes an exciting and far-reaching way of including differently-abled students.

By creating a classroom that is cooperative and inclusive, student's acceptance and success in the general education environment will be greatly enhanced. All students and all teachers have much to gain by structuring the classroom and school environment so that it provides generous support for learning, connecting, and caring.